

January 21, 2003

Re: Media Ownership Policy Reexamination

While I believe that most industries in this country should operate in a free-market environment with little or no regulation, there are certain areas where this should not be the case. The public airwaves is a prime example. They are called the public airwaves because that is who they serve, the American public. Relaxation of these rules will only serve the huge media conglomerates who have been lobbying aggressively so that they can make a larger profit. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this, to allow a few large companies to control a good portion of the public airwaves does not serve the population well.

Take newsgathering for instance. With more consolidation, the number of actual competing newsgathering outlets will be reduced greatly. This means that the public will be getting the same information from less sources, in essence, a breakdown of checks and balances by competition. The democracy of this country was built upon allowing many voices to be heard. How can this happen if only a few control most of the media outlets in this country.

It's already happened in radio, where one company now owns more than half of the commercial radio stations in the country. Rather than improving how these outlets serve their respective communities, the opposite has happened. There is more voicetracking from other cities and much greater automation at these stations that are bought out by large companies such as Clear Channel. Tell me, how does this serve anybody but the company's bottom line in the end.

In the end, the FCC should be fighting for keeping a variety of voices to be heard through the media outlets in this country. Lessening these regulations will only negatively affect the American public in the end.